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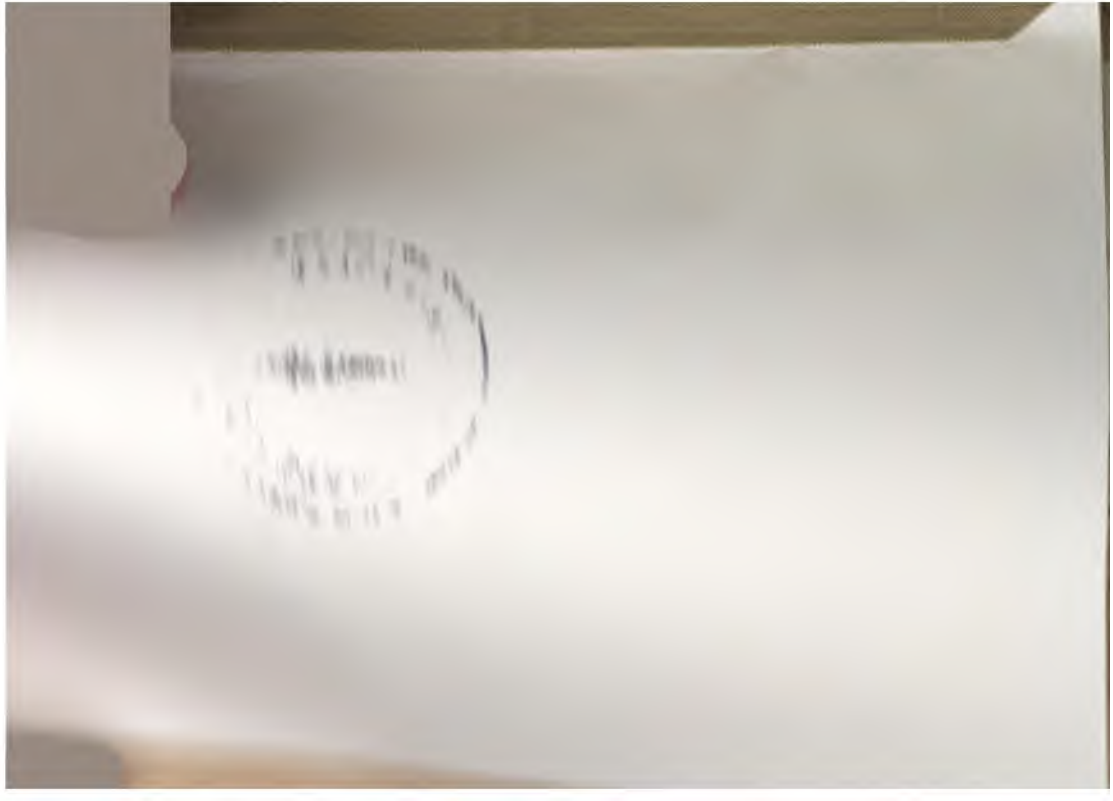

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VIRGILIUS THE SORCERER

Mediæval Legends. No. III

THE WONDERFUL HISTORY OF

VIRGILIUS THE SORCERER OF ROME

ENGLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME

Vergilius-Maro, P.

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INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT the well-nigh two thousand years that separate the time of Augustus Cæsar from our own, the name of Virgil and his fame have been transmitted with undiminished lustre through varying import, according to the creed and culture of those many succeeding generations by whom the tale of his glory was taken up and handed on to the present day.

Revered and beloved during the golden age of Rome's literature and newly arisen empire, as the sweet singer of her pastoral life and military glory, Virgil, prophet alike and poet of Rome's high destiny to rule as lawgiver over a conquered world, became identified with her fame.

> "Tityrus et fruges Æneisque arma legentur
> Roma triumphati dum caput orbis erit."

During Rome's decay, Virgil was revered less as a poet than as a model of rhetoric and oratory by grammarians, who held up his verses as themes to be studied and dissected, rather than emulated by their

scholars, while by Neoplatonic philosophers they were esteemed a source of hidden wisdom, to be interpreted only by means of allegory and symbol. This system of allegorical and symbolic interpretation, which first enabled cultured Greeks to extract an ethical meaning from their naturalistic, ancestral myths, and then authorised Alexandrian Jews to read a spirit of Greek philosophy into the letter of Hebrew law, when adopted by dawning Christianity, became the means of claiming Rome's chief poet as prophet and precursor of the new faith, which alike derided and denied the gods that she adored.

Thus introduced into Christianity, symbolism, stamped by the approval and practice of the early Fathers, became the great feature and instrument of mysticism, whether ortho- or heterodox, throughout the Middle Ages, and by its power of evaporating fact, tended to confirm that theoretic contempt of matter and practical denial of its laws, which, sanctioned by the Church, sought to rule the schools and dominate life. Thus Ebrard de Bethune, a great expert of mystic interpretation,* did but express the feeling of

* In process of time the number of readings that could be applied to any one text had come to be fixed at four. Literal, moral, spiritual, and mystic; or historie, moral, allegorie and mystie.

his time and order in applying to the "literal" laity the Old Testament text:

"Expectate hic cum asino (Abide here with the Ass)."*

Resistance was at length opposed to these assumptions when the spirit of scientific research, long dormant, sprang into life by contact with the physical side of Greek philosophy as presented by Arab commentators, and interpreted by the Jews, who acted as carriers of merchandise, mental and material, between East and West.† The conflict which thus ensued between the "Domina" Theologia and her "Ancilla" Philosophia resulted in the compromise, resisted by the Church but adopted in the Schools, of two-fold Truth—the one Truth, transcendent or theological, the other Truth demonstrable or philosophical; hence the axiom that a proposition true in theology might be false in philosophy, or *vice versâ*.

With the decay of antique culture, and gathering darkness of barbarism, Virgil, remembered as a poet only by the lettered few, became an object of super-

* The laity were sometimes able to turn on their mystic lords, witness King Richard, who having captured the warlike Bishop of Beauvais in battle, sent his cuirass to Pope Celestin III. with these words:

"Vide an tunica filii tui sit an non."

† Of eastern imports also from the nearer point of Spain.

stitious awe to the uncultured crowd, who merged antique "sapiens" in mediæval "magus." This double view of Virgil's personality resulted in the strange simultaneous growth of two distinct traditions attached to his name: the one, poetic and classical, based on knowledge (direct or by hearsay) of his works, and on such details of his life as were handed down, as is supposed, from the biography of Suetonius by Ælius Claudius Donatus, celebrates Virgil as—

> "Musarum lumen per sæcula clarum
> Stella pœtarum non veneranda parum."

In the other popular and romantic tradition Virgil appears as no poet, but as a wizard, "Gran Matematico," working wonders.

> "Par engin et par Nigromance
> Dont il sot tote la science." *

The first, or poetic tradition, is represented in its highest type by the Virgil of Dante—

> "Anima cortese Mantovana
> Di cui la fama ancor nel mondo dura.
> E durerà quanto 'l mondo Lontana."

* In his "Græcismus," a grammatical manual regarded as a classic from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, Ebrard de Bethune, before quoted, makes a curious distinction of accent between "mathĕsis," scientific, and "mathēsis," necromantic, in the following distich:

The poet who, though as Vates, imbued with wisdom, mystic and wonderful, yet yields the palm of omniscience to the "Maestro di color che sanno," and stands out primarily and essentially as poet of Rome, the "Gloria dei Latini," whose heir and descendant Dante felt and boasted himself to be; for Dante, justly held as the very concentration and climax of the Middle Ages, is something more besides. There were other Italian singers and German dreamers; there were scholastics and mystics of many lands and many tongues; but to Dante alone was given the plastic, poetic power to shape the vague dream and start it into life, and to melt even the hard dogma of Lombard sentence into glowing verse. It was the *Antique* in Dante, innate and not acquired,* that, surpassing Art by a return to Nature, made him even more akin to Homer than to Virgil, his beloved and chosen guide.

Very different to Dante's conception of Virgil was that of the men and women who, in the crowded streets of Italian towns and villages, shrank awestruck from the gaunt, dark traveller who brought tidings of the Inferno he had seen. To them the name of his guide

> "Scire facit mathēsis, sed divinare mathēsis
> Datque mathēmaticos comburi theologia."

* Compare, for instance, Dante with Poliziano.

through its lurid depths was indeed familiar as "Virgilio gran matematico," who had bent Nature to his will, if not actually by Nigromantia, then through the occult sciences of Mathêsis, Geometria, and Astronomia.

> " Devant Jhesucrist fu Virgiles
> Qui les arz ne tint pas a guiles
> Ains y usa toute sa vie
> Tant qu'il fist par astrenomie
> Maintes granz merveilles a plain."

Or, as other equally good authorities would have it, Virgilius owed his power to the white magic of that "Ars Notoria" which, taken down in writing by Solomon from the dictation of angels, was by him left at Jerusalem in books, which at the taking of the city by Alexander the Great, being there found of Aristotle, made of him, heretofore a rude unlettered man, the great philosopher whom we all know and admire.

Passing over the classical tradition of Virgil and the efforts, prompted rather by pious zeal than by literary good faith, to claim the poet as Christian, conscious or unconscious, we herewith offer the mediæval legend which, though opening with the French and closing with the Anglo-German version, consists chiefly of the popular local tradition of Naples; for it was not

Mantua, his birthplace, but Naples, possessing his tomb and boasting herself the work of his magic skill and object of his tender care, that cherished Virgil's memory with fond affection, and in a web of mediæval fiction interwove his name with every natural feature and historic monument of the city that he was said to have loved so well. This purely popular and local legend, for long unknown to the world at large, was from the twelfth century and onwards gravely taken up, and in Latin dress spread throughout Europe by the foreigners who from many lands came as conquerors or visitors to Italy. Chief and first among such may be counted Konrad of Querfurth, sent by Emperor Henry VI. as his representative and Chancellor to dismantle Naples. Faithfully as the Chancellor executed his mission of destruction, he yet, in a letter (1194) to the Bishop of Hildesheim, giving his impressions of Italy and the history of Naples according to accepted local version, expresses his wonder and delight at beholding with his own eyes and under Teutonic sway so many classic scenes. Strange indeed were the geographical discoveries of the Chancellor, who found Olympus and Parnassus in Southern Italy and the Minotaur's labyrinth in the antique theatre of Sicilian Taormina.

Another learned chronicler is Gervasius of Tilbury

(1212), Professor at Bologna, Seneschal of the Kingdon of Arles, and author of "Otia Imperialia," an encyclc pædia of absurdities compiled to beguile the leisure c Emperor Otto IV.*

* "Otia Imperialia," composed in the thirteenth century b Gervasius of Tilbury, was published entire by Leibnitz in hi edition of Brunswick papers and in part by Maderus (1678). Th work consists of three parts, treating respectively (and it might b said, promiscuously) of history, geography, and marvels, eac part bearing the title of Decisio. Decisio No. I. which, nc including the dedicatory parallel between Royalty and Priest hood, contains twenty-four chapters, opens with the Creation i the following terms: "Cum principio de principio, in principi creavit cœlum, et terram hoc est mundum." The subject thu introduced is continued with many particulars not found i Genesis, such—*e.g.*, as that though the world is round, the eart is square and is overhung by the sea, which is suspended in th air above the dry land. Satisfactory proof of this statement i given by the story of a sailor, whose knife falling overboard dropped out and pierced the table at which his wife was sittin at home. Proceeding by easy stages through the scheme c creation, Gervasius by chapter xx. reaches Arts and their dis coverers, and gives a somewhat fitful list of inventors—to wit Numa Pompilius, inventor of the months January an February, Noah of the vine, Sardanapulus of cushions, Prome theus, brother to Atlas, of iron rings; after these come Phalaris Abimelech, Dædalus, Abraham, &c. &c.

Decisio No. I. and its successor No. II., treating thus gravel

Of other two distinguished chroniclers, Johannes of Salisbury doubtless wrote from personal experience as a traveller, having, as he mentions in his "Polycraticus," crossed the Alps ten times and twice traversed Southern Italy.

Whether a certain Alexander Neckam, foster-brother to Richard Cœur de Lion, Professor at Paris and Abbot of Cirencester, ever actually and in person reached Italy, the reader is free to judge for himself from the following lines, occurring in "De

of history and geography, stand in no need of excuse or preamble, but for No. III., devoted to the marvels of all times and countries, the writer, feeling that some preparation is necessary, hits upon it in the ingenious definition of the Wonderful as consisting in the ignorance of the beholder, and thus supported, he claimed, and doubtless with success, credence for all his travellers' tales, being not only the busy promulgator of every wild tale told of Virgil, the "Phœnix" of scholars, but, as some say, the veritable literary father of Pope Joan; for in the days of Gervasius, as in our own, few there were who followed the rule laid down by his cotemporary the monk Robert Abolant, who, refusing to accept usage as authority for old wives' fables, maintained:

"Ubi ratio repugnat usui, necesse est usum cedere rationi."

"Where reason strives with usage, usage must yield to reason."

Laudibus Sapientiæ," the poem of Neckham's old age:

> "Romæ quid facerem: mentiri nescio, libros
> Diligo, sed libras respuo, Roma vale."
>
> At Rome, as a truth teller, what could I do?
> Who love letters, scorn lucre, so Roma, adieu.*

"Bartolomeo Caraczolo dicto Carafa," the sole native Neapolitan chronicler, in his "Cronica de

* Alexander Neckam, or Nechamus, called in jest "Nequam" (Worthless), and in error Nuques, was an Englishman, born 1150, or thereabouts, at Hertford. Having distinguished himself as a scholar at St. Albans, where he was educated, the school of Dunstable was committed to his care; passing thence to Paris, as professor in its university, he attracted thither crowds of students by his fame as theologian, philosopher, rhetorician, and poet. Returning to England, Neckham, in 1186, demanded, and in 1187 obtained, the charge again of his old school at Dunstable, but his request in the following year to be transferred to St. Albans, or as some think there to receive the monk's habit, was refused in the following terms by Abbot Guarin: "Si bonus es, venias, si 'Nequam' nequaquam."

In no way taking this refusal to heart Neckam easily consoled himself by becoming a canon in the Augustine order, and in 1225 Abbot of "Excester."[1]

Besides mingling verse in his many prose works, and pro-

[1] Sic "Hist. Lit. de la France," tom. xviii., elsewhere given as Cirencester.

Parthenope," a compilation, as he himself admits, "di diverse cronache," reaching to 1382, makes no rash claim to authenticity. He tells the tale as it was told to him: "Ma la verita de tutte le cose, la cognobbe et conosce solo Dio."

A Spanish version there is, which we here dispose of. Virgilio, a hidalgo at the Spanish Court, being found guilty of loving and betraying a certain Donna Isabella, is sent by the King to prison, where for seven long years he languishes, forgotten and forlorn. At length, one Sunday, when about to sit down to table, the King bethinks him of Virgilio, and cries, "My cavaliers! What of Virgilio? Where is he?" Then replies a courtier friendly to Virgilius, "In prison your Highness keeps him, in prison guards him." "Up,"

ducing a Latin version of Æsop's and "Anien's" (Avianius?) fables, Neckam composed the following original poems: "De Laudibus Sapientiae," "De Officiis Monachorum," "Ad Viros Religiosos," "De Conversione Magdalenæ," "Commendationes Vini," "Carmina Diversa." So highly does the pun "Nequam" seem to have been esteemed by Neckam's co-temporaries, that, on his death in 1227, it found a place in his epitaph, which, after bewailing his irreparable loss, thus concludes:

"Dictus erat Nequam, vitam tamen duxit æquam."

Nequam he was indeed by name,
Quamquam of great and godly fame.

says the King; "let us dine, and having eaten, we will go seek Virgilius." "Without Virgilius I will not eat," cries the Queen. So to prison where was Virgilius they went, and thus spake:

KING. What doest thou here, Virgilio; what doest thou?

VIR. Signore, I comb my hair and I comb my beard, which have grown long and have grown white, for on this day I have fulfilled seven years in prison.

KING. Come forth! Come forth Virgilio! that three years fail of ten.

VIR. Signore, if your Highness so command, here shall my whole life be spent.

KING. Virgilio, as reward of patience thou shalt dine with me this day.

VIR. Torn are my garments; I may not thus appear.

KING. Garments I will give to thee, Virgilio. To thee will I command garments to be given.

This pleased well the cavaliers, and pleased the ladies, most of all her who was called Donna Isabella; and they called an archbishop, and by him the Donna Isabella was wedded to Virgilio, who then took the Donna by the hand and led her out to walk in an orchard.

At Naples, the legend of Virgilius is said to be dead or dying, but that it still lingers on elsewhere in Italy is proved by the following love song, taken of late years from the lips of a contadina at Leece, for which, as for the invaluable aid of countless references, quota-

tions and researches contained in his admirable work, "Virgilio Nel Medio Evo," the translator of a German text desires to offer most grateful thanks and acknowledgment to Professor Comparetti, of Pisa University.

LOVE SONG OF LECCE.

"Diu! ci tanissi l'arte da Virgiliu
'Nnanti le porte to' 'nducià lu mare
Ca da li pisci me facià pupillu
'Mmienzu le riti to' enià 'ncappare;
Ca di l'acelli' me facià cardillu,
'Mmienzu lu piettu to' lu nitu a fare
E suttu l'umbra de li to capillis
'Enià de menzugiurnu a rrepusare."

Ah! had I but Virgilio's art,
Before thy gates I'd bring the sea,
Mid fish, a little fish I'd be,
A captive in thy net to dart.
Of birds, as tiny linnet, I
Against thy breast
Would make my nest;
In shadow of thy locks to lie
At midday I would come to rest.*

* The translator, while adhering to the letter of prose, requests at times the liberty of paraphrase in verse, which for that reason will always be given in the original.

CHAPTER I.

"GESTA ROMANORUM."

GENTLE reader! Herewith we present to you the wonderful history of Virgilius, the great sorcerer of Rome.

Now once upon a time, in days of yore, Rome was a city of such power and might that her citizens were held in awe and reverence by the whole world, yet for all that, Romulus, Emperor of Rome, was moved by envy to slay his brother Remus, though Remus, giving up all part and lot in Rome, had, with his treasure, betaken himself to Campania* in the Ardennes Forest, and there, by the river Vesla, had built him a great and beautiful city, girt around by mighty walls all carved and sculptured within and without, and tunnelled beneath the foundations in such wise that all impurities dropping down from the city were swept away by the flowing river, and this city, the fairest in its time of all the land, was called by the name of its builder, Remus, but has now come to be called Rheims.†

* Champagne.

† It was not alone by the Virgilian legend that Remus was

When tidings came to Rome of Remus and his city it displeased Romulus sorely to hear that the walls of Rheims towered so high, that a man standing in the moat could scarce shoot an arrow over them, whereas Rome had but low walls and no moat at all. After a time it happened that Remus was moved with a desire to see his brother, so leaving his wife and infant son in Campania, he set off with a great company for Rome, and when he reached the city and found that its walls were indeed but low and mean, Remus boasting that he could vault them as he stood, did so; but Romulus hearing how his brother had leaped the wall, was very wroth and swore that he would have his brother's life; and so it came to pass that when Remus came to the palace, Romulus seized upon him and with his own hand cut off his brother's head.

Having thus slain his brother, Romulus gathered together a mighty host and marched to Rheims, which he utterly destroyed, levelling its towers, walls and palaces with the dust; failing, however, to lay hands on the wife of Remus, who had fled with her infant son to her own people, Romulus, after destroying the city and laying waste the land, returned to Rome.

made godfather to Rheims. Nicolas de Brae, a thirteenth-century epic poet, not only asserts, "Hanc dixere Remis veteres à compositore," but even adds that Heaven granted the famous "Ampulla" of holy oil at the prayer of the illustrious founder of Rheims:

"Cujus prece rorem
Misit in ampullam cœlestem Rector Olympi."

CHAPTER II.

"C'est bien raison que je vous compte des histoires de Virgile de Romme."

WHEN Romulus was gone, the wife of Remus, now his sorrowing widow, came forth from her hiding-place, and hiring masons and other artisans, rebuilt Rheims with such splendour as she could command, though not as it had been at first. This noble lady also brought up her son with all care and love, and when he had reached man's estate, she thus addressed him: "My son, when will you avenge your father, whom Romulus, your uncle, slew with his own hand?" "Mother," said the young Remus, "if it be so, rest assured that within three moons my father shall be avenged." Assembling, therefore, all his friends and kinsmen on the mother's side, Remus marched with a great host to Rome; entering the city unopposed, and forbidding his followers to do hurt or harm to any Roman citizen, he drew up his army before the palace. Meanwhile, within its walls, Romulus held counsel with his lords how best to escape the coming danger, and when the matter was put before them, one of these lords, who was also a senator, arose and said, "Sire! as you slew the father, so shall the son slay you." At that moment young Remus entered, and roused to fury by the sight of Romulus seated on

the Imperial throne, he seized his uncle by the hair and cut off his head, then, turning to the senators and lords, asked if they were minded to make war on him for the deed; but the senators answering "by no means," straightway offered the vacant throne to young Remus as rightful heir to his uncle deceased, so Remus was crowned, and that done he sent for his mother. Then it was that Rome was first so strengthened with walls and moats that her fame spread far and near, in so much that the lords of other lands came, built palaces in Rome and dwelt in them. The reign of Emperor Remus was indeed great and glorious, but short with all, and when he died and left a young son, named also Remus, to succeed him, a certain knight, well favoured and warlike, who had followed the father Remus from Campania, rose in rebellion against the son and did him much hurt.

This knight of Campania, Figulo by name, was married to a lady called Maja, after her father Majus or Magus, who was a great senator. One night Maja dreamed that she gave birth to a laurel branch, which straightway striking root, grew up to be a stately tree, bearing fruit and blossom. Misdoubting what the vision might portend, Maja asked its interpretation of a soothsayer, who thus replied: "Be of good courage, Maja, for the dream foretells that you shall bear a son excelling all mankind in wisdom and knowledge; to ensure its entire fulfilment take heed, however, to call the child after the branch, 'Virga.'" Accordingly, when soon after a son was born to her, Maja called

his name Virgilius, after the branch, though as other equally wise men will have it, the child was so named from "Vigilo," because being born in troublous times he required to be so long and so carefully watched; however that may be, Rome quaked from one end to the other when Virgil was born, and he grew up a wise and understanding spirit, and went diligently to school.

While yet a child, Virgilius lost his father, and as Maja, for the love she bore her husband, refused to marry again, the kinsmen ruthlessly robbed her of houses, lands, and money; often did she make complaint to the Emperor, but he, though near of kin to her husband, was a bad man, beloved neither by high nor low, so little heed was paid to her complaint.

Soon after these things the Emperor died and his son Perseus ruled in his stead with so heavy a hand that he was greatly feared by all in Rome. Virgilius, however, was then away at school in Toledo, where, being a youth of good parts, he studied hard.

CHAPTER III.

"Ecce querunt clerici Parisiis artes liberales, Aurelianis auctores, Bononiæ codices, Salerni pyxides, Toleti dæmones, et nusquam mores."

Clerks go to study the liberal arts at Paris, classics at Orleans, canon law at Bologna, medicine at Salerno, diabolics at Toledo, and good manners nowhere.

Now on a certain holiday it so befell that as Virgilius, profiting by the freedom granted to the students of Toledo to take air and exercise, was wandering alone in the mountains, he came upon a cave, which entering, he penetrated so far and so deep as to leave all light behind and to find himself plunged in total darkness; pressing on still further, however, he at length perceived a faint glimmer of light from above, and at the same time heard a voice from below calling his own name, "Virgilius! Virgilius!" Looking round he saw no man, but again the voice rang out, "Virgilius! Virgilius!" "Who calls?" said he. Then said the voice, "Virgilius! do you mark upon the ground a slide or bolt marked with the figure Tau?" "I do," replied Virgilius. "Then," said the voice, "draw back that bolt and let me free." "And who, pray, may you be?" inquired Virgilius. "I am an evil spirit," said the voice, "driven out of a Jew, and shut up here till Doomsday, unless delivered by the hand of man,

so haste you, let me out, and I will give you books of Necromancy from which all power and knowledge may be gained." Truly tempting were these promises, but to make fulfilment sure and fast, Virgilius demanded prepayment of all service, nor was it till after receiving the books and instruction in their use that he consented to draw the bolt, which disclosed a small dark hole, from which, with many a twist and many a turn, the evil spirit struggled forth, standing, when fully emerged, in the form of a black and gigantic man before the amazed Virgilius, who scarce crediting that so huge a figure could be confined in so small a space, exclaimed, "Never again could you get in now you are grown so large." "Get in," replied the spirit, "of course I could." "I'll wager the best I have you can't," maintained Virgilius. "Done," cried the foul fiend, and with many another twist and many a turn, he wriggled in again, then Virgilius drew the bolt. "Virgilius! Virgilius!" shrieked the fiend, "What have you done?" "Stay where you are until the day appointed," said Virgilius. So the devil was cheated, but Virgilius from that day forward became a great master of the Black Art.

CHAPTER IV.

" Assis estoit en sa chaière
Une riche chape forrée
Sans manches avait afublée
Et s'ot en son chief un chapel
Qui fu d'une moult riche pel ;
Tret ot arrier son chaperon.
Li enfant de maint haut baron
Devant lui à terre séoient.
Qui ses paroles entendoient
Et chacun son livre tenoit
Einssi comme il enseignoit."

" Premier li enseigne Gramaire
Qui mere est, et prevoste et maire
De toutes les arts liberax."
* * * *
" La vii. est astrenomie
Qui est fins de toute clergie."

On academic chair of state
Wrapped in furred sleeveless cope he sate,
With hood pushed back, which falling low,
Showed cap of sables on his brow.
Before him, seated on the ground,
Full many a high-born child was found,
With book in hand and earnest thought,
Intent on what the master taught.

First grammar he to them imparts,
Mayor, mother, chief of liberal arts,
* * * *
Whose seventh is astronomy
The crowning end of all clergie.

SOON after the adventure just related, the mother of Virgilius, finding herself now too old and infirm to bear the burden of her own and her son's affairs, sent a messenger to Toledo, bidding Virgilius leave his school and come take up his heritage, which by rights was the richest in Rome. On reaching Toledo this messenger found Virgilius busy teaching the highest in the land, for he was a clever youth, and better versed in the seven liberal arts than any doctor of his day.

At the news of his kinsman's depredations, Virgilius was cut to the heart, not, indeed, for the loss of wealth, for of that he had enough and to spare, but for the sake of his aged mother, to whom accordingly as cheering and suitable gift, he sent four pack-horses laden with gold and jewellery for her adornment, and a white palfrey on which to take the air, despatching the same by the hand of the messenger, whom he dismissed with a rich reward. Thus laden, the servant returned to Rome, leaving Virgilius behind in Toledo to consider how he might best convey himself and his belongings across the sea. When at length all things were ready, Virgilius said adieu to Toledo, and, accompanied by a large train of scholars, made his journey to Rome, whither, after a twelve years' absence, he was joyfully welcomed by his mother and her poor kinsmen, who received the home-comer with great honour, while the rich ones, far from making any stir at his coming, showed themselves hostile and unfriendly, refusing even to eat and drink with him. Virgilius accordingly bestowed rich gifts of horses

oxen, gold, silver, and weapons on those of his ki
men who had done him no wrong, nor were th
neighbours forgotten who, in his absence, had shc
kindness to his mother, with whom he and his schol
now took up their abode.

Soon after these things came round the season
tax-gathering, when all Roman subjects and
holders were bound to present themselves before
Emperor. Virgilius, accordingly, attended by a gr
retinue of scholars and retainers, went, like all
world, to Court, and there solemnly demanded jus
for the wrong done him by his kinsmen of
Emperor, who, promising to take counsel on
matter, promptly did so, with the very men who
done the wrong. Then said these misdoers, "S
let might be right, and leave the lands to those
hold them. Why rob your friends for a schoolmas
Bid him go back to his books, as there is nothing
him in Rome." The Emperor accordingly des
Virgilius to return again in four years or five, wl
with counsel held, judgment would be given in
case. Furious at this answer, Virgilius depar
vowing to have vengeance for the justice that
denied. Hastening home, accordingly, he called
gether his friends, whom he installed with
sufficient in his various houses until the follow
July, when, his fields being now white for harvest
sent forth those friends to gather the ripe fruits
his barns, while his enemies, powerless to br
through the magic spell cast over the stolen land

the rightful owner, beheld in helpless fury the loss of their expected profits.

Then those enemies, resolved to behead Virgilius and burn his possessions, assembled in such might that the very Emperor, for terror of them, fled from Rome; for among them were the twelve senators, who, by his authority, ruled over the whole world. Virgilius ought rightfully to have been among the twelve, but his foes, after robbing him of his wealth, now denied his rights, and sought to take his life; but he, no whit dismayed at the approach of this mighty host, came forth from his castle to meet his enemies face to face, and by his necromantic art kept them transfixed and spell-bound to the spot, none being able so much as to stir hand or foot, whilst he thus addressed them: "You think," said he, "that after robbing you can crush me, but your reckoning is out, for never, while I live, shall you touch a penny that is mine, and as for the Emperor, go tell him that while he takes five years to think, I will take my own where I may find it, caring no straw for his might or yours." So saying, Virgilius returned to his castle, leaving the discomfited host to betake itself back again whence it came.

CHAPTER V.

" Par engin et par nigromance
Dont il sot tote la science."

WHEN the mocking words of Virgilius were made known to the Emperor, so incensed was he that, vowing death to the rebel and destruction to his goods, the furious monarch called on all knights, vassals, and retainers of the Roman Empire to follow him to the siege of Virgilius and his castle. But this fresh proud army fared no better than the first; for no sooner were his walls encompassed than the wizard cast a spell which hemmed in the hostile force on every side with magic waters deep and impassable; then hailing the helpless Emperor and reminding him of their kinship, he offered peace and begged for friendship. "Rascal," cried the furious Emperor, "when in my power, dearly shall you pay this insolence." Finding his friendly overtures rejected, Virgilius then feasted his followers outside the castle walls in sight of the starving enemy, who, unable to stir hand or foot, partook but of the smoke and steam that rose from the camp fires of their foe.

At length to this army, hungry and sore bestead, came succour in the form of a master of the Black Art, who, appearing in the Emperor's camp, offered for a great and rich reward to throw the hostile garrison into a

deep sleep, and his terms and offer being accepted by the goaded Emperor, he cast a spell so powerful that Virgilius' army sank as though dead upon the ground, and he himself, hardly able to withstand the charm, and not knowing where to look for help, was sorely troubled in spirit; and it came to pass that, as he sate in his window and beheld the foe already beginning to scale his walls, Virgilius, partly to seek for aid and partly to keep himself awake, took his great Black Book, and lo! as he turned over its pages he found a counter-charm of greater virtue, and therewith he awoke his people and held the foe transfixed and motionless, as though turned to stone. Where each man chanced to be, there was he fated to remain, some half way up the ladders, some already on the wall, some in the very act of crossing over, with one foot up and the other down—all, from highest to lowest, even the very Emperor and his sorcerer, were left hanging in mid air at the pleasure of Virgilius; and when the monarch, impatient of delay, demanded of his magician how long they must thus hang, he, having no readier reply, could but shout defiance to Virgilius, vowing that he would have the mastery—some day. To the "some day" Virgilius bade him welcome, but for that whole livelong day kept him and his Emperor, with all the mighty host, hanging like flies upon a wall; but when night fell, then came Virgilius in secret to the Emperor and said, "Ill does it befit you, sire, as so great an Emperor, thus to stick half-way upon a wall. Why grasp at what you cannot

gain?" "Free me but from this plight," replied the Emperor, "and I will restore your lands and do your pleasure." "Pledge me," said Virgilius, "favour and protection, and you are free." Then the Emperor swore to acknowledge Virgilius as his kinsman, and to receive him as his favoured friend. This done, Virgilius loosed the spell, and bringing the Emperor and his army within the castle, set strange rare dishes and costly wines before them; and when they had well eaten and drunk, he sent them away, each with a gift, according to his rank. Thus did these foes part as friends, and when returned to Rome, the Emperor not only restored his own to Virgilius, but loaded him with gifts and appointed him Chief Councillor. Then Virgilius, to show his gratitude, built for his Emperor a square tower, in each of whose corners might be heard all that was said in the corresponding quarter of the city, while in the centre every word spoken, or even whispered, throughout Rome could be distinctly heard.

CHAPTER VI.

" Que fist a Sanson Dalidà
Quant le livra aux Philistins,
N' a Hercules Dejànirà
Quant le fict mourir par venins;
Une femme par ses engins
Ne trompa-elle aussi Virgile
Quant à uns panier il fut prins
Et puis pendu enemy la Ville."

As Samson was by Dalidà
Delivered to the Philistine,
And Hercules Dejànirà
Slew with a poisoned web malign;
So, by a woman's subtlety
In pannier pent Virgilius,
Was hung on high, 'twixt town and sky
(Haud sicut terræ filius).

AFTER these things, it happened that Virgilius loved a lady, by name Febilla, the fairest of face and noblest in birth of all at Rome; but this Febilla, far from returning Virgilius' proffered love, sought but to mock and flout him by its means.

To this intent, accordingly, she at length, after long refusal, consented to receive a visit, bidding him come, not in open daylight and by the door, but, on pretence, forsooth, of avoiding notice, in the dusk and to the foot of her dwelling, a lofty tower overlooking

the market-place,* promising thence to let down a basket, in which he should be drawn up to her window in the top story of the tower. In high delight Virgilius appeared at the appointed time and place, to find the promised basket awaiting his coming. He entered, and slowly the basket ascended with him, but when midway up the lofty wall it stopped, and from her upper window the lady, looking out, exclaimed, "Rogue of a sorcerer, there shalt thou hang!" There, accordingly, Virgilius hung, flouted and jeered by all who with morning light flocked to the market-place; and there, with broadening day, hung he till the Emperor, feeling shame to see his favoured friend thus made a laughing-stock for clowns, himself made entreaty with the lady, till she at length released her captive love who, vowing speedy vengeance, hasted home.

Next day every fire in Rome went out, and as no power availed to rekindle the extinguished flames, the Emperor, well guessing whence the mischief came, sought its remedy from Virgilius. Said Virgilius: "If you would have fire, let a scaffold be put up in the market-place, and thereon bring the maiden who betrayed me, clothed as penitent at church door in a smock. Then make proclamation that all who would have fire must come and take from the maiden, each for himself, none giving or lending to his neigh-

* Tower of the Frangipani, destroyed in the thirteenth century by Gregory IX.

bour." So the Emperor, seeing that needs must, put up the scaffolding, and when the maiden, clothed as penitent in a smock, was led forth, lo! she appeared wrapped and enveloped in flames of burning fire, and of this fire the Romans took—some by tapers, some by lamps, some by straw, and some by shavings, only the rich brought torches; but, rich or poor, each could take but for himself, none might borrow, none might lend, none could buy, and none could sell that magic fire. Three days stood the maiden ere Rome was again supplied, nor was it till the fourth that she was suffered to depart, well guessing whom she had to thank.*

Then the Emperor, roused to indignation, seized Virgilius and cast him into prison, condemning him on a certain day to be brought thence and put to death; and when on the appointed day the poor prisoner was led forth to die on the Vinimale Hill, having reached the fatal spot, he begged pitifully that some water might be given him to drink. So they brought water in a pail, but he, drinking not thereof, cried aloud, "Emperor! All hail! Seek me at Catania." So saying, he leaped head foremost into the pail and vanished from their midst.

* The origin of this legend has caused much discussion. May the translator suggest it to be a wild travesty of Vesta's Fire?

CHAPTER VII.

"SALVATIO ROMÆ."

THE Emperor of Rome, being desirous to establish her peace and prosperity at home and extend her conquests abroad, inquired one day of Virgilius if he could devise any means whereby Rome, being forewarned, might hold herself forearmed against the plots and machinations of her enemies. Virgilius replied that he could do so, and to this intent accordingly set about his great work, which went by the name of "Salvatio Romæ"—*i.e.*, Rome's preservation or deliverance. This work consisted of a set of sculptured figures or statues, set up on the roof of the Capitolium, as the Town Hall of Rome was called.

The statues, which represented the gods of every country subject to Roman rule and governance, stood in a circle, surrounding and facing the statue of the god of Rome, each subject statue having in its hand a bell, and did one of those countries so much as meditate rebellion or hostilities, its god, straightway turning its back to the god of Rome, fell to pealing its bell furiously and incessantly, thus summoning the lords and senators of Rome, who, marking to what country the bell-ringer belonged, forthwith commanded the Romans to arms and march forth against the foe.

Now when the Carthaginians, a people who had

suffered long and sore oppression at the hands of Rome, heard of this, her "Salvatio," they were moved by envy to devise a plan for its destruction. They accordingly chose out three trusty messengers and, providing them well with gold, sent them to Rome with instructions to pass themselves off as diviners or interpreters of dreams. Shortly after their arrival these men stole secretly out by night to the foot of a certain hill in Rome and there buried deep down in the earth a pot of gold; then seeking the bridge that spans the Tiber, from it they let down into the river bed a little cask filled with gold pieces.

Next day these men demanded audience of the senators, which granted, they thus spoke: "May it please your lordships, we dreamed last night that at the foot of a certain hill in Rome there lies buried a pot of gold, which, if it please your lordships to bestow on us, we at our own cost will unearth." To this proposal the lords and senators having graciously assented, these dreamers hired workmen, dug up the gold and made merry with it.

Some days after the diviners again appeared before the Senate with a petition. "We pray your worships' permission," said they, "to seek out another treasure which has, like the first, been revealed to us in a dream, and if refused to us, who alone can seek it, will be lost to all." "Relate your dream," said the senators. "Noble lords," replied the diviners, "we dreamed that sunk in a certain part of the river bed lies a pot of money."

Then these senators, suspecting no guile, gave the desired permission, together with an exhortation to use diligence in the search; thus admonished, the diviners hasted to hire boats and men, and by wisely searching exactly where it was to be found, they raised the cask, and with its contents made merrier than before, not, however, forgetting to put aside a portion for their lordly patrons.

Deeming the time now ripe for the accomplishment of their mission, these men appeared once more as suppliants before the Senate. "Worshipful sirs," said they, "be it known to your lordships that last night in a vision we beheld twelve casks of gold lying deep under the foundation stone of the Capitolium, whereon rests the 'Salvatio Romæ.' Now seeing how greatly the former concessions of your worships have turned to our advantage, we in gratitude are content to dig up this third treasure to your profit and Rome's; give us but workers and we will do our best." Then these senators and lords, taking two lucky hits as augury of a third, granted workmen whom the diviners set to dig beneath the Capitolium's foundation stone, and when the building was well-nigh undermined, the dreamers stole away by night and next day the Capitolium fell and with it the Salvatio, which was broken to atoms and utterly destroyed, and the senators, seeing themselves betrayed, were sad; but it was too late to catch the diviners or mend the mischief, and from that day Rome prospered not as heretofore.

CHAPTER VIII.

"MIRABILIA URBIS ROMAE."

NOW it so happened, while Virgilius assisted the Emperor with his counsels in the government of Rome, that great and grievous complaints arose on account of the robberies, murders, and other deeds of violence that were nightly committed in the streets of the city. The Emperor, accordingly desiring to secure the public peace and safety, took counsel with Virgilius how best to punish those thieves and vagabonds who roamed the streets, maltreating honest people in the dark.

"Sire," said Virgilius, "cause a copper horse and rider to be made and stationed at the Town Hall; this done, make proclamation that a bell will toll each night at ten o'clock, after which no man is to go forth into the streets." The Emperor set himself to obey these instructions, but the thieves and ne'er-do-wells, mocking alike copper horse and curfew bell, made ready to roam about as before, but, behold! no sooner did the bell cease to toll than the copper horse and rider set off at full gallop, traversed every street in Rome, treading down all before them, so that by next morning's dawn, over two hundred corpses were found lying stiff and stark upon the pavement. The surviving thieves and vagabonds,

however, instead of giving themselves up to repentance and mending the error of their ways, spent their time in devising a means of escape from punishment by rope ladders, furnished at one end with grappling irons, that, at the warning sound of the steed's copper hoofs, they stuck into the walls of houses, which scaling like flies, they reached a height beyond reach of the horse and his rider.

The Emperor, beset in consequence with fresh complaints, again betook himself for counsel to Virgilius, who thus replied: "Sire, cause to be made two copper dogs that shall attend the horse and rider, then issue fresh proclamation, warning all men for their lives to abstain from going forth after the curfew bell has tolled." Dogs and proclamation were accordingly made, but the thieves and vagabonds, mocking both, ran up the ladders as before, only this time they were pursued and bitten to death by the dogs. Thus did Virgilius keep the peace of the city.

Virgilius also made for the common weal an inextinguishable glass lamp by which Rome was so thoroughly illuminated that the narrowest street was lighted up as though by two torches. The lamp was mounted high upon a huge marble pillar, which by a bridge was connected with the Imperial Palace that stood hard by in the heart of the city. Outside the palace walls, Virgilius placed a great metal archer, who kept his metal bow and arrow ever aimed at the lamp ready to extinguish it; but the lamp burned on and on unceasingly until one ill-starred day, about 300

years after Virgilius' death, it so befell that some city maidens passed on their way to sport and play at the palace, and as they went by, one of them, in mockery of the archer who stood thus ever aiming and never shooting, said jeering: "Why don't you shoot? What hinders you?" And so saying touched the bow with her finger—in a moment the arrow flew off, hit the lamp, and shivered it to a thousand atoms, and the archer, terrifying the maidens out of their senses by the sight, took to his heels and fled never again to return.

Among the many wonderful works of Virgilius in his time was a large and fair orchard that he planted behind his palace with every kind of fruitful tree and flowering shrub that grows out of the ground. In this paradise every beast that is of use or pleasure to mankind roamed at will, and its glades resounded day and night with the song of birds; in the midst of the garden was a spring, whose waters, clear and cool as crystal, formed a pool wherein fish could be seen darting to and fro, and this garden, so rich in delights of flower and fruit, of beast and bird and fish, yet needed no protecting care from hedge or wall, for around it Virgilius cast a magic spell, through which no man from without could enter in, nor could any living creature from within go forth beyond its boundaries.

Other and yet greater works Virgilius wrought, for beneath the ground he built to himself a vaulted treasure house, whose door was guarded by two metal men, who struck by turns great hammers on a mighty

anvil with shock so awful that at the very sound the air was rent and every passing bird fell dead upon the ground.

CHAPTER IX.

" In queste tempi mostra che nascesse
Che Virgilio si se innamoarava
D'una giovine, che assai gli piacesse."

Upon a time, it so befell
Virgilius loved, as I've heard tell,
A maiden fair who pleased him well.

ONCE upon a time Virgilius heard so much of the Soldan's daughter and her beauty, that from hearsay he became enamoured of her, and desiring further and nearer acquaintance, he built a bridge which spanned the air from Rome to Babylon, and thereon he passed to visit the Princess, who, though surprised by the appearance of the stranger, yet gave him kindly welcome, and after he had made some stay with her, this princess, desiring to learn of what state and condition her guest was at home, demanded in turn to visit his country. Then Virgilius, nothing loth to bear his lady love away, promised that she should pass over many lands and cross the sea without so much as touching them with the sole of her foot. So, over his airy bridge was the Soldan's daughter borne to Rome

by Virgilius, where he suffered none to behold or speak with her but himself.

Then he showed to her his palace with its paradise and the vaulted treasure-house guarded by iron men, who stood for ever hammering at the gates. Fain would Virgilius have given of his treasure to his Princess, but she would have none of his gifts, saying that she had enough to do guarding her father's treasure store at Babylon. So long as she was pleased to stay, Virgilius kept his Princess in the paradise, and when at length she desired to return again to Babylon, he bore her in his arms over sea and land by his airy bridge, then laying her softly down on the bed of her own chamber, he committed her to the care of the gods, and departed as he came.

Meantime the Soldan, who, in sore grief at his daughter's loss, had vainly sought her throughout his realm, was told at morning's dawn that Lo! the Princess lay slumbering peacefully on her bed. Hastily arising, the monarch sped to his daughter's chamber, to learn from her own lips whither she had gone, and how returned.

"My Lord Father," replied the Princess, "a man, glorious to behold, bore me through the air to his country, and there showed to me his palace with its garden and his treasure house, but to no living soul save himself did he suffer me to speak, nor do I know his country's name."

"Dear daughter," said the Soldan, "if the man comes to bear you again away, ask him for fruits of

his country, and bring them to me, that by them I may know whence he comes."

This the Princess promising had no long waiting for performance, for soon did Virgilius reappear and bear away his lady love to Rome, whither she was well pleased to go, and when, after sojourn there, he brought her back at her desire to Babylon, she took with her walnuts and other fruits and showed them to the Soldan, her father, and he, beholding them, said, "The man who stole you from me lives by the way of France."

Soon after these things, the Soldan brought to his daughter a cup containing a curiously compounded draught, saying, "Take this cup, my daughter. Beware of tasting it yourself, but if the stranger come again, make him drink of it, and when he has drunk, call me."

"Dear father, I will do so," said the Princess. So, when Virgilius next appeared, she, according to her father's bidding, made him drink of the cup prepared for him; and straightway, after drinking, he fell into a deep sleep. Then she called the Soldan, who took Virgilius captive.

Next day the Soldan called together his lords and nobles in the great hall, and commanding the captive Virgilius to be brought before them, declared him to be the man who had so often carried away the Princess to strange lands.

"And for this, your misdeed," cried the infuriated monarch to his prisoner, "you shall pay with your life according to my will and pleasure."

"Bethink you, Sir Soldan," replied Virgilius, "that had such been my will and pleasure, you had never again looked upon your daughter. Let me, therefore, return in peace to my own land, and I will trouble yours no more."

"Not so," cried the Soldan, "but a shameful death shall you die."

"My lords," cried the weeping Princess, "if die he must, let me die with him."

"We have children enough without you," replied the angry father, "so go, burn with him, if you will."

"Sir Soldan, for all your power and might, your reckoning is out," said Virgilius; and forthwith, by his enchantments he made it seem to the Soldan and his lords as though the deep great river of Babylon were flowing into their hall, and that for dear life they must swim, but Virgilius, leaving these potentates to plunge and leap about like frogs, bore his Princess to his airy bridge, and fled away with her to Rome.

CHAPTER X.

" Ovo mira novo sic ovo non Tuber ovo
Dorica castra cluens Tutor Temerare timeto."

(Enigma of fourteenth century.)

" O sommo vate, quanto mal facesti
A venir qui ; non t'era me' morire
A Pietola colà dove nacesti
Quando la mosca, per l'altre fuggire
In tal loco ponesti
Ov' ogni vespa doveria venire
A punger quei che su né boschi stanne."

Great prophet-poet, how wast thou mistaken
In coming hither ; better sure to die
In Pietola, where thou to life didst waken,
Than in such place to mount the fateful fly,
Which by its kindred truly is forsaken,
But whither every wasp may freely come
To drive its sting in woodland wand'rers home.

NOW when Virgilius had thus carried away the Soldan's daughter from Rome to Babylon, he cherished her with tender care, for truly she was the loveliest creature ever seen, and desiring in his fond affection to dower her richly from his great possessions by sea and land, he built for her a city whose foundations stood upon eggs buried away down in the depths of the sea. In this city Virgilius built a square castle

tower, and upon its roof he set a rod of iron, and across the rod he laid a bottle, and on the bottle he placed an egg, and from the egg there hung by a chain fastened to its stem an apple, which hangs there to this day, and which no man may disturb; and when the egg shakes the city quakes, and when the egg shall be broken the city shall be destroyed.

Virgilius built likewise a market for his city, and in one of its walls he inserted a piece of meat which possessed the virtue of keeping all provisions brought within the market fresh for the space of six weeks. At the great gate of the city, moreover, he made a causeway, curiously paved, and beneath it he banished and shut up all hurtful reptiles and insects, insomuch that not even a worm or a midge was found either in the subterranean caves over which the city upon pillars stands, or in the gardens within its walls. On another of the city gates Virgilius set up a great brazen fly, as large as a frog, which frightened away the thick swarms of flies that heretofore had tormented the city and its inhabitants. Perceiving, soon after the flies had been banished, that leeches suddenly increased and multiplied so much as to destroy the pools and wells, Virgilius cast a great golden leech into a certain well, whereupon the plague was instantly stayed and all the waters were healed; when, however, after many years the golden leech was by accident cast out in cleaning the well, the living leeches instantly reappeared and in every well remained until the golden effigy was restored to its appointed place.

Virgilius also built for his city a theatre with two great doors, each surmounted with a bust sculptured in Parian marble: that on the right was of smiling countenance and serene, while the other was gloomy and overcast as though by sorrow or anger. Those who entered by the right hand door succeeded, while others who chose the left failed in the business for which they sought the city, in each case, however, only if passing through the said doors without set purpose or choice. Virgilius also made a belfry which, though built of solid stone, shook in unison with its bell.

Now when Virgilius had made an end of building his city, he called its name Naples and handed it over as a possession to his Princess and her children for ever, and soon after he gave his Princess in marriage to a Spanish knight of high renown.

Now when the Emperor of Rome marked how Naples had become the fairest city in all the world, and that its lines were laid in the pleasantest part of Roman territory, he coveted the new-built city; he therefore sent secret messengers to his feudal lords, bidding them assemble their forces and meet him at Rome, and with the mighty host thus gathered together, this Emperor marched forth, burning and plundering as he went, to the siege of Naples. The Spanish knight, however, now Lord of Naples and husband to the Princess, while defending the city with skill and courage, sent a messenger to bear the tidings of distress to Virgilius, who, in great wrath and

indignation against the Emperor, bade the messenger tell his lord to have no fear as help was at hand.

Then, by his enchantments, Virgilius caused all streams of fresh water from the whole country round to flow into Naples, whose tanks were thus filled to overflowing as though after thunder showers, while in the Emperor's camp, without the gates, not a drop was to be had for man or beast.

Virgilius himself, moreover, came out in all his might against the Emperor, who met him midway from Rome, having by thirst been forced to break up his camp and with shame to return by the way he had proudly come. So when these two great armies had crossed each other on the way from Rome to Naples, Virgilius, in mockery, thus greeted the Emperor: "How comes it my Lord Emperor," cried he, "that your Majesty has so quickly turned aside from the siege of Naples and returned thus empty-handed to Rome?" Then the Emperor, seeing himself mocked, was wrath, but Virgilius, caring nothing for the imperial displeasure, went on his way to Naples. There he made its lords pay homage to him as their liege lord, and having taken an oath of them never to admit the Romans to their city or to pay tribute to Rome, he himself returned thither in order to consign his Roman dwellings to his kinsmen and his treasure to its subterranean vault; that done he packed up his books and movable possessions and carried them to Naples, but on arrival, lo! it was found that the

great Black Book had been left behind. Virgilius accordingly dispatched a messenger to Rome bidding Merlin, his faithful scholar, come in all haste and secresy, and when this trusty scholar, in ready obedience, appeared before the master, Virgilius said, "Merlin! haste thee back to Rome, and bid Roberto deliver unto thee my great Black Book and bring the same to me, but beware, my son, of looking into it lest evil befall thee." Merlin, promising obedience, hastened back to Rome, and by journeying day and night, soon reached Virgilius' palace, and receiving from Roberto the great Black Book, set out on the return journey. Hardly, however, had he gained the highway to Naples when, impelled by burning curiosity, he opened the great Blaek Book and began to read in one of its pages, but the page was not half scanned through when he found himself surrounded by a swarm of awful spirits, who, glaring at him with fiery eyes, cried with one accord, "What wouldst thou? What wouldst thou?"

Powerless in the moment of terror to bethink himself of aught else, Merlin commanded the spirits to strew the road from Rome to Naples with salt and keep it swept and clean. The spirits obeyed, but finding the work not to their taste they returned no more to Merlin. From Virgilius himself, however, they received the still harder task of making in one night the passage that pierces the mountain called "Posilippo," so long is this passage that a man standing midway

can scarce see to either end. Virgilius, moreover, by his magic art, endowed this passage with the virtue of protecting all who entered it from the treacherous ambush of a foe.

CHAPTER XI.

"Fadet joglar," cries the troubadour Giraud de Calenson, "trust not to me for a song that will never fail to please, but rather learn to speak, to rhyme, to play and to tell of Peleus.*

" E de Virgili,
Com de la conca e saup cobrir,
E del vergier
E del pesquier
E del foc que saup escantir."

And of Virgil,
And how he blew the clarion shrill,
And of his garden on the hill
His cheering blaze, his cooling rill,
The creatures of his magic skill.

NOW, when Virgilius was settled with his books at Naples, he made there a great school, in which he himself taught the art of Nigromantia, of which indeed

* Here follows a long list of jongleur's accomplishments.

he was a greater master than all who ever came before or after him. He also brought doctors from far and near to teach in his school, and moreover endowed lands for the support of his scholars, for, being wifeless and childless, he loved them as his own sons, devoting his great wealth to their advancement and ruling them nobly, as he well could do, being one of the greatest, and had he so willed it, altogether the greatest of men in his time and country.

For the common good and his own undying fame, Virgilius also provided Naples with the first public baths ever known. These baths went by the name of the Baths of Puteoli, and as their waters possessed divers healing virtues, an inscription was set up over each bath or grotto, whereby the sick, halt or maimed might know the disease for which its waters were efficacious.

In process of time, however, these inscriptions, which by proclaiming the virtues of the Puteoli Baths and enticing thither all men to be cured, threatened to deprive other schools of practice and profit, excited the envy of that great school of medicine which of late time had arisen at Salerno. Incited, therefore, by envy and greed, three of the greatest doctors of Salerno, named respectively Sir Antonius Sulimela, Sir Philippus Capograssus and Sir Hector de Procita, taking a small bark, crossed over from Salerno to Puteoli and there, with iron instruments brought to that intent, destroyed and defaced the inscriptions on the baths ; but vengeance overtook those wicked men,

for, on the return crossing to Salerno, a great storm by miracle arose and wrecking their bark, drowned them all three, and as proof that such things did indeed come to pass, does not a parchment indicted in the year of grace, 1409, declare how that after the death of these three men, a pillar with inscription to commemorate their fate was erected in Puteoli, near the spot known as "Tre Colonne?"

Virgilius, moreover, made a great iron horse which cured each and every horse disease, either merely by its presence or else by touching on it the part affected on the real horse; but as were the baths of Puteoli to the leeches of Salerno, so was this horse the object of hatred and envy to the horse doctors of Naples, in so much that they bored it through and through and thus deprived it of all healing power.

Other benefits besides did Virgilius bestow upon his beloved city. For the good of the deserving poor he made a great fire at which they might be warmed, and on each side of the fire, a spring of water, one cold for drinking, the other hot, wherein they might bathe, while between the fire and the springs stood a statue bearing, written on its brow, these words: "Who strikes me harms the city." Untouched and undisturbed, thus stood the statue for many and many a year, until there came one day a priest, who reading the words written on its brow, cried, "Hurt the city! Forsooth, rather I believe that by overturning you I shall fall upon some treasure that you hide and which the master set you here to guard." So saying, the

priest uplifted his right hand and with it dealt the statue such a tremendous blow that it fell in atoms at his feet, and as it fell the fire went out and the springs dried up and the priest found no treasure, and the deserving poor, in sorrow and in anger at his deed, raised a hue and cry of murder against the greedy priest who had robbed them of their consolation and their joy.

It is also recorded of Virgilius that he made an iron head which could not only speak but also foretell the future, and, as some say, it was by misinterpreting the oracle that Virgilius met his death in this wise. Being about to undertake a journey, he consulted the oracle if it would come to a prosperous conclusion. The reply was: "Yes, if he took care of *his head.*" Taking this to mean the oracle itself, Virgilius took every measure to secure its safety, and with a light heart started; heedless of his own, for journeying, exposed to the sun's fiery dart, he was seized with a burning fever in the head, of which he died.*

On the precipitous slopes of "Monte Vergine,"† which stands near and almost opposite to Naples,

* This tradition would seem based upon the accounts given by Donatus of Virgil's death from fever.

† Mons Virginis, Virginum or Virgilianus, is said by the biographer of Guglielmo da Vercelli, founder of the church built upon it, to have in old times been known as "Monte Virgiliano." In a Bull of Celestin III., 1197, relating to the monastery, it is styled "Monasterium Sacro Sanctæ Virginis Mariæ de Monte Virgilii."

Virgilius laid out a garden of simples, among which grew the plant called "Lucius Herb," which, when cropped by blind sheep, restores their sight. On the mountain's summit, Virgilius, moreover, set up a brazen trumpeter, whose trumpet was, on mathematical principles, so constructed as to receive, and when struck, send back the hot fiery blasts of south wind when blown over from a terrible mountain called "Vesuv," which in the month of May belches forth such volumes of smoke and ashes, nay, even of burning tinder, over the fruitful Terra de Lavoro that it has acquired the name of "Mouthpiece of Inferno."

Now when Virgilius had made an end of building his city, he conjured a model of it into a glass bottle with a very thin neck, and in so doing foretold that so long as the bottle remained whole the city would be safe. For all that, Naples was stormed and taken in 1191, but then, as Chancellor Konrad, an eye-witness, testifies, there was a crack found in the bottle. The same Konrad also records that at the storming of Naples the victors spared a certain great gate, probably that one known as the Nola Gate, from terror of letting loose all the snakes and reptiles that Virgilius had shut up beneath it.

CHAPTER XII.

" Ain man ze Rôme saz alsus
Der was genant Virgilius."

A certain man at Rome there was
And he was called Virgilius.

HAVING thus described the great and good works wrought by Virgilius for his beloved city Naples, we now proceed to tell of his wonders at Rome. It is recorded that once, while in early days at emnity with the Emperor, Virgilius was put in prison, and that one day, as he and his fellow prisoners were taking air and exercise in the prison yard, Virgilius, spying a piece of charcoal lying on a heap of ashes in a corner, picked it up, and with it drew on the prison wall the picture of a great ship. When the sketch was complete, the artist gravely bade his companions take ship in the vessel before them, and come away with him, and when, to keep up the jest, a number did so, he gave to each man a stick for an oar, and placing himself at the helm, bade them row with a will at the word of command. They did so, and lo! the ship rose into the air and flew away to Apulia, where, casting anchor on the top of a hill, Virgilius dismissed his motley crew, and set out for Naples, and as recorded in the " Mirabilia Vrbis Romæ," the road leading south from the Viminal Hill, on which the

prison stood, from that day and adventure has borne the name "Vado ad Napulum." *

Meanwhile the sun set, and darkness covered the face of the earth. So Virgilius, finding himself benighted, begged at a wayside hut for shelter, to which the peasant owner bade him welcome, adding, however, that he had not so much as a crust of bread to set before his guest, but Virgilius, producing some grapes that he had plucked on the way, bade his host put them into a cask and pour water over them. No sooner was this done, than the most delicious wine poured from the cask. As for food, Virgilius despatched one of his ministering spirits to Rome, bidding him bring viands sufficient, both roast and boiled, from the table of the Emperor, who, already informed of the airy flight from prison, exclaimed, at the disappearance of the dishes from under his very eyes, "This is the work of none other than Virgilius!"

Next morning, on saying farewell, Virgilius presented the ever-flowing wine cask to his poor host, with the assurance that so long as no one looked within, the stream would flow in the same abundance, and, sure enough, the owner found to his joy that no matter how much wine were drawn, more always remained, until one luckless day, when with wits clouded by good wine, the peasant, heedless of the warning, and tempted by curiosity, peeped into the cask, an found—nothing, for from that moment it ran dry.

* Now Magnanapolis.

CHAPTER XIII.

"LES FAICTZ MERVEILLEUX DE VIRGILE."

VIRGILIUS, on coming to settle at Rome, made acquaintance with the Emperor's master of the horse, and by his skill in medicine treated successfully various diseases and distempers in the Imperial stables. One day it so happened that the Emperor, having received from the ambassadors of a far country the gift of a splendid and apparently very valuable horse, called upon Virgilius, as a judge, to give his opinion. "Sire," replied Virgilius, after careful inspection of all its points, "the steed is indeed well made, but unfortunately it has been reared on asses' milk, and will therefore never be either swift or spirited." The Emperor, misdoubting the verdict, caused inquiry to be made of the ambassadors, who confessed that the foal, having lost its dam, had indeed been reared by an ass. Struck by the confirmation of Virgilius' opinion, the Emperor commanded that daily allowance should be made to him at the expense of the State of half a loaf.

Soon after the Emperor, having his crown jewels laid out before him, sent for Virgilius and said, "Master, you know many things, and few are hid from your ken! Tell me now, if you be indeed a

judge of gems, which think you is the best of these spread out before you?" "Which, sire," asked Virgilius, "do you yourself esteem the best?" The Emperor having pointed out one gem of peculiar brilliance, Virgilius laid it, first in the palm of his hand, then to his ear, and said, "Sire, in this stone there is a worm." Forthwith the Emperor caused the stone to be sawn asunder, and lo! in the centre was found a worm concealed! Amazed at the sagacity of Virgilius, the Emperor, at the charge of the country, raised his allowance to a whole loaf per diem!

Again, soon after, the Emperor, thinking that he had cause to misdoubt his own parentage, sent once more for Virgilius, and, carefully closing the door, thus addressed him: "Master, your answers to my former questions have proved your wisdom. Tell me therefore, now, whose son am I?" "Sire," exclaimed Virgilius, "why such a question, knowing that you are son to the late Emperor?" "Virgilius," replied the monarch, "give me not flattery, but truth. Tell me whose son am I." "If your Majesty will have it so," replied Virgilius, "know, then, that you are son to a baker." "That," said the Emperor, "I must learn from my mother." So his Majesty sent for his mother, and when she was come in he threatened and stormed at her until she perforce agreed with the assertion of Virgilius. Then, at length satisfied, the Emperor dismissed her, and again carefully closing and barring the door, he said, "Master, I pray you tell me by what wisdom came you to the knowledge of

these things?" "Sire," replied Virgilius, "that the horse had been reared on asses' milk I judged by the natural sign of its having long hanging ears, which are unusual in horses. That the stone contained a worm I guessed from its warmth, for stones being by nature cold, I judged that this one, which was warm, must contain some living creature." "But,' interrupted the Emperor, "how knew you that I was son to a baker?" "Gracious Lord, when I made the amazing discovery concerning the horse, you appointed as my reward half a loaf, and when I discerned the worm hidden in the gem, you increased the half to a whole loaf. Your gifts gave the clue to your origin. Had you been son to king or emperor, you had deemed some great city but a paltry recompense for such service, but coming of such a stock, you thought it enough to pay me off with your father's wares." "Henceforth," cried the Emperor, shamed by the rebuke, "you shall be rewarded by no baker, but by a free-handed, open-hearted prince."

CHAPTER XIV.

IN a Latin poem (sixteenth century), "De corrupto ecclesiæ statu," Justice thus speaks :

"En sic meum opus ago
Ut Romæ fecit imago
Quam sculpsit Virgilius,
Quæ manifestare suevit
Fures, sed cæsa quievit
Et os clausit digito ;
Numquam ultra dixit verbum
De perditione rerum
Palam nec in abdito."

In duty lo, I'm as punctilious
As was the image that Virgilius
Carved for the Roman city,
Which nightly crime, told every morning,
Till being wounded, taking warning
With ruin not to strive, it
Just laid its finger on its lip,
And ne'er another word let slip
In public or in private.

ONCE upon a time it so happened that the Emperor issued a decree forbidding any man, on pain of death, to do work of any kind or sort on his royal birthday. Apprehending, however, some considerable difficulty in enforcing obedience to his law, the Sovereign con-

sulted Virgilius on the best means of discovering offenders.

Virgilius accordingly, to meet the royal wish, set up a high pillar in the midst of the city, and on the top of the pillar an image, which kept watch upon and informed the Emperor against all who disobeyed his law, and on the accusation of this image many offenders were put to death.

Now, there lived in those days at Rome a certain smith named Phocas, who, having worked as usual throughout a royal birthday, bethought himself in bed how many a man had lost his life for no other cause. So Phocas, arising, went out and up to the image, threatening it with these words: "O Image! Image! Your chatter has cost many a poor sinner his life, but herewith I forbid you to betray me, and if you do so. know then that I will strike off your head and grind it to powder with my hammer."

Next morning, when the Emperor's messengers came early as usual to take the list of offenders, the image said, "Read what is written on my brow," and lo! on its brow were written these words:

"The times are out of joint and men grow worse and worse. He who tells the truth gets his head smashed with an iron hammer, so let all who love peace, look, listen and keep silence. Go, tell your lord what you have seen and read."

Now, when the Emperor heard the messengers' report, he appointed twelve armed knights to mount guard over the image and to bring bound hand and foot

to him all and sundry who should devise evil against it. So these twelve knights being fully armed, went up to the image, and with courteous greeting besought it in the Emperor's name to declare who had been guilty of threatening its safety, and breaking the law. "The twofold culprit," replied the image, "is Phocas the smith." Then these twelve brave knights, fully armed, fell upon Phocas the smith, and dragged him, bound hand and foot, before the Emperor. "Phocas," said the Sovereign with awful majesty, "How didst thou dare to break my law?" "Sire," replied Phocas, "I cannot obey your law, being forced daily to earn eight pennies," and when the Emperor would know what purpose these eight pennies were to serve, the accused thus made explanation: "Sire," said he, "May it please your Majesty, every day all the year round I must perforce have

"Two to repay,
And two to lend,
Two to throw away,
And two to spend."

"How so?" asked the Emperor. "Sire," said Phocas, "Twopence daily I repay, in his old age, to my father who nourished me in my youth. Two I lend out to my son, who now, a child at school, will repay me when a man at work. Two I throw away on my wife, who, were I to die to-morrow, would take another husband and forget me. Two I require for my own living."

On hearing this explanation, the Emperor was troubled in spirit, thinking within himself, "If I force this smith to change his wonted way of life, he may lose his reason from confusion of ideas; I will therefore rather lay a heavy charge upon him, which, if he transgress, he shall pay the penalty of past disobedience;" so, turning to Phocas, the Emperor said, "Go in peace, and work as heretofore, but at your peril say no word that has here been spoken till you shall have looked a hundred times upon our royal countenance." So when a notary had written this order in a book, the smith made humble obeisance and departed.

When Phocas was gone, the Emperor summoned his councillors to prove them if they could interpret the case of

> "Two to repay,
> And two to lend,
> Two to throw away,
> And two to spend;"

but these wise men having no answer ready to hand, begged a week's grace for meditation and reflection, which being granted, they fixed meetings and held consultations, but all to no effect, until one day, towards the end of the allotted week, one philosopher bethought him that peradventure the words might possibly refer to Phocas the smith who had held converse with his Majesty, so in a body went these wise men to Phocas, and of him they asked him the meaning of the strange words; but Phocas, who had no button, but a head

upon his shoulders, said never a word, until money being offered he thus came to terms. "If," said he, "you would have the answer to the riddle, go, fetch a hundred pieces of gold, for only on that condition may I tell it." So these wise men, seeing no other way of keeping tryst and time with the Emperor, fetched the hundred pieces, which the smith, still keeping silence, carefully scanned one by one, nor was it till after narrowly regarding the device stamped on each side of every piece that he made known the case of the eight pennies to the wise men, who went their way rejoicing, and when, the week of grace being now expired, they appeared before the Emperor and gave their interpretation of the riddle. Lo! it tallied word for word with that of the smith; but the Emperor, well knowing that it was none of their own forging, thought within himself, "Now will I avenge me upon Phocas for breaking faith with me, and taking bribes from these men for in so doing he has wrought his own ruin." The Emperor sent therefore for Phocas, and when he was brought into his royal presence, said, "Master Smith, grievously have you transgressed in breaking the commandment of secresy that I laid upon you; now, therefore, must you pay the penalty of disobedience.

"Gracious Lord," replied Phocas, "the whole world is yours to dispose of at your will, much more my little life, which I submit to your gracious pleasure as to a beloved Lord and Father; know, however, that I am guiltless in the matter of your commandment, fo

not till I had looked a hundred times on your Imperial countenance as imprinted on the hundred gold pieces, exacted from these lords, did I give heed to their petition." Then the Emperor laughed and said, "Phocas, go in peace, for you have more wisdom than all my councillors." So Phocas departed and from that day dwelt undisturbed, no man daring to make him afraid.

CHAPTER XV.

"LO SPECCHIO MARAVIGLIOSO."

"Maint autres grant clerc ont esté
Au monde de grant poesté,
Qui aprisrent tote lor vie
Des sept ars et d'astronomie;
Dont aucuns i ot qui a leur tens
Firent merveille par lor sens;
Mais cil qui plus s'en entremit
Fu Virgile."

Full many a clerk the world has seen
Of great renown in poesie,
Whose life-long task the arts have been
All seven with astronomy;
And some among them wonders wrought,
But none who learned and none who taught
Were equal to Virgilius.

ONCE upon a time there dwelt in Rome a good and godly knight, and this knight had a wife who, though

fair to see, was bad at heart, caring little for the laws of God and man, and still less for her lord's happiness. So this good knight, pondering one day on the wickedness of his wife and how it might be mended, said to himself, "I will go on pilgrimage for her sins.' So he made ready to go; when all was prepared for his departure, this good knight said to his wife: "Dear wife, I am about to brave the sea and cross over to the Holy Land. I leave you, therefore, under your own charge, so take heed to bear yourself as beseems a good and discreet woman when I am far away." So saying the knight departed, but no sooner was her lord lost to sight than this wicked wife sent for a friend of hers who was a very learned man, and to him she said, "If from here you can kill my lord, who is far away, I will wed you in his stead." "If I do this thing will you indeed wed me in his stead?" asked the learned friend. "Yes, surely," replied the lady. So the learned friend made a waxen image of the good knight who was crossing the sea as pilgrim to holy places for the sins of his wicked wife, and this image he set up against the wall and tortured it with many an ache and many a pain which the knight himself was hereafter to bear.

Now it happened on a day, as the knight was crossing a street in the Holy Land, that he met a master of the Black Art named Virgilius, who, steadfastly regarding him, said, "Friend! I have somewhat to tell thee in secret." "Master," replied the knight, "say on." Then said the master, "This day, but for

my help, you were a dead man, for your wife is wicked and plots your destruction." Then the knight, seeing how well this master, without seeing her, had judged his wicked wife, put trust in him and cried, "Dear master, save my life and I will pay you well." "Gladly will I save your life," replied the master, "but power so to do, I have only if, laying aside your garments, you enter a great bath of deep water." Willingly the knight consented to these conditions, and when now in the water, Virgilius handed to him a mirror bidding him say what he saw therein. Said the knight, "I see a man in my house who has set up on the wall a waxen image of myself." "And what," asked the master, "does the man now?" "Now," replied the knight, "he has taken up a bow and is aiming an arrow at the image." "Then, if you love your life," cried Virgilius, "dive deep down in the waters when he lets that arrow fly, nor rise until I bid you." So when the knight saw the bow bent and the cord stretched, he dived deep down in the waters and there remained till, at the master's bidding, he rose to look again at what the magic mirror would reveal.

"The man," said he, "has missed the image, the arrow flew too high, so he is sad." "Take heed to him again, say what he does," said the master. "Again," replied the knight, "he is aiming at the image." "Then again, for dear life, dive when he is prepared to shoot," cried the master. So the knight, seeing the arrow prepared to fly, dived as at the first, and when he arose, the master, as before, bid him look to see

what the man was doing. "Sore grieved is the man," replied the knight, "for again he has missed the image, and he tells my wife that should he miss his mark a third time it will be his death, but so close is he now to the waxen effigy that to my thinking he cannot fail to hit." "With all speed get you under water till I bid you rise," was the master's command once more, which the knight obeyed, and when he had risen and looked again in the magic mirror's face, lo! he beheld how the miscreant had missed his aim and how the arrow, turning on him, had pierced him to the heart, through and through, so that he died, and was buried away from human sight and ken by the knight's wife in a deep hole under the bed, no man knowing what had befallen. Then the master bade the knight come out of the water and resume his garments, demanding his prayers as sole payment for his rescued life, but, added Virgilius, "henceforth beware of your wicked wife." So the knight thanked Magister Virgilius with a grateful heart, and crossing the sea once more returned to his own home, where his wife received him with a face sweet and innocent as though she knew no guile; as for the knight he said never a word, but sent for the kinsmen on either side to come and dine with him, and when they were all assembled he thus spoke: "Dear friends, be it known to you that the cause of this assemblage being made is the necessity of my declaring unto you each and all that my wife is a wicked woman, and has sought to compass my death." Then the wife denied the charge, swearing that she

was innocent, but the knight unfolded the tale of all as it had come to pass, and how by the master's magic art he had been saved from death, and when the tale was ended he further said to the assembled kinsmen, "If you credit not my words, come and I will show you the man, where he is buried." So the kinsmen went with the knight into an inner room and there, under the wife's bed, they found the body of the man, pierced to the heart, through and through, by an arrow shot. Then the kinsmen on either side ran and fetched the judge, and he commanded, forthwith, that the woman should be burned, and when that was done and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven, the knight got a new, good wife, and with her lived happily to his life's end.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Di scienza è morte lo piú valente
Non credo che nel mondo il simil sia
Le sue virtudi non m'usciran di mente
Ben mi dolgo, Non poasso io altro fare."

The wisest and the best has passed away,
His like we vainly seek the wide world o'er;
His greatness ever in my mind shall stay,
Well may I grieve, for I can do no more.

MANY and great as were the wonders wrought by Virgilius, he had promised yet stranger and greater

things to his Emperor. He had pledged himself to make trees and shrubs bear fruit thrice in a single year, and to cause the trees to bear bud, blossom, and fruit together and at once. Ships were to sail as easily against as with the tide, and money to be gained as quickly and as surely as it was spent. These, and many other great deeds did Virgilius promise to perform, always, however, with the one proviso, that permission be granted from above.

Virgilius, moreover, on attaining to honour, wealth, and power, had built him beyond the walls of Rome a splendid castle, surrounded on all sides by deep waters, and having but one single doorway, whose approach was guarded by twelve metal men, six to a side, who ceaselessly and silently beat on the ground before them with flails, and were stopped or set in motion by a hidden mechanism, of which the secret was known only to Virgilius.

Having thus performed so many wonders and promised more, Virgilius proposed to himself a strange and marvellous feat, which was none other than to renew his youth, and thus starting afresh in life, to have time for the accomplishment of all his plans. To this intent, accordingly, Virgilius besought the Emperor to grant him leave for three weeks, that he might do business in a far country. This leave, however, being refused by the Emperor, who was loth to spare for so long his trusted counsellor, Virgilius went his way to his own house, and there, calling for the servant whom he most loved and trusted, bade the

man bear him company to his castle; and when they reached the castle standing out from amidst deep waters, and were now close to its one approach, Virgilius said to his servant, "Go on before me into the castle."

"Sir," said the servant, "that I cannot do, because of the brazen men, who would slay me with their flails that ceaselessly and silently they beat on the ground before them."

Then Virgilius showed to his servant the secret of the engine which stopped or set in motion the brazen men, and having, by its means made the flails to cease, master and man went together into the castle. Then Virgilius, closing and bolting the door, thus spoke: "My dear servant, in that I have loved and trusted you before all other, so do I now of you require a harder service than of all the world besides." So saying he led the way to a vaulted chamber dug out below the ground, where, with soft, clear light, hanging from the roof, a lamp burned day and night. "Do you see, in the midst of this vaulted chamber, a cask standing beneath this lamp?" asked Virgilius.

"Sir," said the man, "I see the cask, and that it stands beneath the lamp."

"There," continued Virgilius, "within the cask you must with salt preserve and pickle this, my body, first cutting it in pieces, and having divided my head into four parts, lay it in the bottom of the cask, with the other parts placed above it in order, my heart being in the centre, and when all this is done, mark

well to cause the cask to stand beneath the dripping of the lamp, and for the space of nine days take good heed to feed the lamp daily with oil. By this means shall I become young again, and have long life before me, if, indeed, it be granted from above."

"Dear master!" cried the servant, in horror and dismay, "far be it from me to commit so foul a deed, I will not kill you."

"But," said Virgilius, "this thing I demand and require of you, as no peril attends its execution."

And so urgently, with threats and entreaties, did Virgilius beset his servant, that at length, though with unwilling heart and mind, the man consented to do his master's pleasure. So that servant cut up and salted the body of Virgilius, and the pieces he laid, in the order prescribed, within the cask, and the cask he took good heed to place beneath the drip of the lamp. This done, he let himself out of the castle, and turning on once more the hidden engine, he set the brazen men to their flails again, so that none might by any means enter within the castle walls, only that he, himself, returned daily to feed the lamp with oil.

Now when some days had come and gone and Virgilius appeared not, the Emperor missed him greatly, longing for his company, and when the seventh day came and still brought not Virgilius, who was lying dead and salted in the cask beneath the lamp within the vaulted chamber, the Emperor sent for the servant whom he knew to be the favourite of Virgilius and bade him say whither his master had betaken

himself. "Sire," said the man, "I know not where my master is, seven days have past since he departed, I know not whither." "Rogue," cried the Emperor, "you lie! Show me the place whither your master has departed or you die." Then said the servant, trembling exceedingly with fear, "Gracious Lord! seven days ago I bore my master company to his castle that stands beyond the walls of Rome amid deep waters and there did I leave him, nor since that day have I beheld him." "Follow me to the castle," said the Emperor, and when with a great company the Emperor reached the castle's entrance, he bade the servant of Virgilius to cause the brazen men to cease beating before them with their flails. "Sire," said the servant, seeking to be excused, "I know not how to cause the flails to cease." But when the Emperor threatened him with instant death, the man quickly, by means of the secret engine, stopped the flails and threw open the door; then went the Emperor and all his followers into the castle. High and low they sought for Virgilius, and when above ground they found him not the Emperor descended to the vaulted chamber dug out beneath the earth, and there, beneath the dripping lamp, beheld the cask where in pieces, preserved with salt, the body of Virgilius lay, and at that sight the Emperor turned to the servant of Virgilius and asked him how he had dared to slay his master, and when the man answered not, the Emperor in fury drew his sword and slew him, and as that servant fell, the Emperor and all his people saw a

strange and marvellous thing, for suddenly before their eyes a little naked child appeared; three times it ran round the cask, crying aloud, "Cursed be the day that brought you here," and then vanished from their sight, but as for Virgilius he lay dead within the cask.

Then the Emperor and all his lords mourned for Virgilius, as did his kinsmen too, with all scholars and doctors in Rome. Naples and other seats of learning likewise made great lamentation for him, when they heard that Virgilius was dead indeed, but the greatest and sorest grief was at Naples, the city that he loved so well.

Seeing that Virgilius was dead and gone, the Emperor thought to take his treasure, but no man could be found who had heart to face the brazen men and their flails, so the treasure remained untouched.

Virgilius, morever, did many great and marvellous deeds that are not recorded in this book. May God in His mercy grant that we be written in the Book of Life! Amen.

CHAPTER XVII.

" Qant morust, si se fist porter
Fors de Romme, peur enterrer,
A ung chastel devers Cezile
Pres de la mer, a une vile ;
Encor i sont les os de lui
Q'en garde."

And when his time was come to die,
He bade them carry him from Rome
To castle-town of Sicily,
Which was to be his long, last home ;
And in that town, upon the shore,
His bones shall rest for evermore
In peace to all eternity.

IT is recorded that once when Roger was King of Sicily there came to him a certain learned man, English by nation, well skilled in the trivium, the quadrivium, in physics, and in astronomy, and this man, who was, moreover, a great master of the Black Art, said to King Roger that he had somewhat to request of his royal bounty. The King, noble in race and heart, thinking that the master desired a gift, bade him declare his wish and it should be fulfilled. " Gold or goods," said the master, " I seek not, but rather that which in the world's esteem would be of small account—to wit, the bones of Virgilius ! " Then King Roger had letters patent drawn out, which gave

authority to the master to take the bones of Virgilius, wheresoever they might be found. Thus provided, the master betook himself to Naples, where so many of Virgilius' works were wrought, and presenting his letters patent, with but small persuasion obtained permission and aid for the search from the people of that city, who lightly promised what they deemed impossible of obtaining, seeing that no man knew the spot where Virgilius lay. The master, however, guided by his art, sought a hilly district, and after much labour, digging deep into the heart of a certain mountain which showed no trace or mark of having been opened, behold! at length, after long search, and deep beneath the ground, the bones were found of Virgilius, and beneath his head the great Black Book containing the "Ars Notoria."* The master claimed possession of all that was discovered, as on him conferred by letters patent, but the populace, bethinking them how many and great had been the benefactions of Virgilius to their city, gathered together in bands to forbid the removal of his bones, on which, as they believed, their common weal and wealth depended; collecting, therefore, the remains of their patron, they placed them in an urn, and with great solemnity, in procession, bore them to the Castle by the Sea (Castellamare), where from that day forward

* "Ars Notoria," discussed by Cornelius Agrippa, and derided by Erasmus, was supposed to have nothing diabolic in its nature, but to bestow the knowledge of certain sciences by the observance of certain practices.

they have been exposed to view within the protection of an iron grating; and, as from personal experience as eyewitness the Chancellor Konrad is able to affirm, were these bones to be touched or stirred from this island castle which Virgilius built, immediately the sky would be overcast and storm and tempest would sweep over land and sea.

Thus it was that, for all King Roger's letters patent, the English master gained not the bones of Virgilius, but only his book of the "Ars Notoria," and great though its value proved to be, we are yet assured by Gervasius of Tilbury, the grave and reverend recorder of this adventure, that ten times rather would the master have had the bones, which by incantation he could have forced within forty days to teach him the magic art entire of Virgilius the Sorcerer.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.,
London & Edinburgh.

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